



# PHIBRON FORWARD NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2

APRIL 2016

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## Boxer ARG, 13th MEU Join ROK Forces in Ssang Yong 2016

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Matthew Jackson, USS Boxer Amphibious Ready Group Public Affairs  
(March 8, 2016)



U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Craig Z. Rodarte

EAST SEA – Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) are participating in exercise Ssang Yong 16 (SY16), March 8-18 in and around Pohang, Republic of Korea (ROK).

Ssang Yong, which means “twin dragons,” is a biennial exercise hosted by the ROK to strengthen interoperability and working relationships with partner nations. This year's exercise will include Navy and Marine Corps participants from the ROK, U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

“Boxer is one of the main batteries for this exercise,” said Capt. Keith Moore, commander of Amphibious Squadron One. “It will provide the full capacity of our Air Combat Element, our battalion landing team, and the logistics element. The ships will provide landing crafts, and Amphibious Assault Vehicles to hit the beach and execute the missions we've trained for during work ups.”

SY16 will focus on the aggregation of forces for an exercise of Marine Expeditionary Brigade level forcible entry operations. ESG 7 and the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (3D MEB) will aggregate elements of the Boxer ARG, Bonhomme Richard ARG, 13th MEU, 31st MEU and the Maritime Prepositioning Forces (MPF) with ROK Navy and ROK Marine Corps Marine Task Force to practice full-spectrum amphibious operations.

“Those forces will go ashore in the Republic of Korea and train across all the various areas we've been training [to] in conjunction with the ROK Marines and Navy,” said Moore. “It's really going to be a tremendous opportunity for us to flex the full capabilities of the ARG/MEU teams.”

3D MEB, ESG 7, ROK Marines and ROK Navy will conduct a simulated amphibious assault along

beaches in the vicinity of Pohang. They will penetrate notional enemy beach defenses, establish a beach head, and rapidly transition forces and sustainment ashore. This will be a simulated, full-spectrum, combined arms forcible entry operation. SY16 will showcase the capabilities, effectiveness, speed, and flexibility of expeditionary amphibious operations and the U.S. and ROK partnership.

“The role of the 13th MEU [during SY16] is to conduct amphibious operations that help build a greater partnership with other naval forces in the Korean theatre of operations,” said Col. Anthony Henderson, commanding officer, 13th MEU. “There will be other navies participating as well, and it gives us an opportunity to demonstrate how we conduct full spectrum operations.”

Ultimately, the relationships forged and sustained at exercises such as Ssang Yong contribute to the security and stability on the Korean Peninsula as well as the entire Asia-Pacific region.

“Being able to use seas to maneuver, being able to provide presence, being able to ensure some form of stability through our operations is what we train to do and what we're prepared to do and demonstrate in Ssang Yong 2016,” said Henderson.

This exercise proves the Navy and Marine Corps' ability to conduct amphibious landing operations in cooperation with our international partners. SY16 will enhance the interoperability and combined capability of ROK and U.S. Navy and Marine Corps forces.

“I have absolute confidence. I know that we are ready. We have executed all of the missions that are going to be put against us,” said Moore. “We've executed them with precision, skill, gusto and with a war-fighting fervor that I know we will take forward when we get tasked.”

Approximately 9,200 Marines, 3,100 U.S. Navy sailors, 4,500 Republic of Korea Marine Corps (ROKMC), and 3,000 Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) members will participate in SY16. Approximately 100 Australian Army soldiers and 60 Royal New Zealand Army will also participate.



# Boxer ARG, 13th MEU Wrap Up Exercise Ssang Yong 16

Story By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jose Jaen, Boxer Amphibious Ready Group Public Affairs (March 18, 2016)



U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Craig Z. Rodarte

**EAST SEA (NNS) –** The Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) team wrapped up their participation in Exercise Ssang Yong 16 off the coast of the Republic of Korea, March 18.

Approximately 9,200 U.S. Marines of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade and 3,100 U.S. Navy personnel of Expeditionary Strike Group 7 joined forces with 4,500 ROK Marines, 3,000 ROK Navy personnel, 100 Royal Australian Army Soldiers and 60 Royal New Zealand Army Soldiers for this year's iteration of Ssang Yong.

"When we think about interoperability we think of the phrase 'one team, one fight,'" said Rear Adm. John B. Nowell Jr., commander, ESG 7. "This exercise has certainly been one team, one fight. United with the ROK Navy and Marine Corps, we are an unbeatable team. Over the past few weeks we observed a cohesive amphibious force come together and we look forward to continued integrated operations in the near future."

During the 10-day exercise the U.S.-ROK Blue-Green team conducted more than 367 flight hours and transported more than 40,000 pounds of cargo ashore. Additionally, the aircraft of Marine Medium Tilt rotor Squadron (VMM) 166 (Reinforced) and the "Wild Cards" of Helicopter Sea Combat (HSC) Squadron 23 expended approximately 4,747 pounds of ordnance during the simulated assault exercises.

The Boxer ARG/13th MEU team worked to increase partner-nation interoperability mission sets with ROK Sailors and Marines during coordinated amphibious operations with amphibious assault vehicles, air combat element aircraft, landing craft, air cushions (LCACs), landing craft utility (LCUs).

"I don't know if I have the words to express how incredibly pleased with how well the ARG/MEU team performed during Ssang Yong," said Capt. Keith Moore commander, Amphibious Squadron (COMPHIBRON) One. "Leaders at all levels worked incredibly hard to make this massive and complicated exercise look easy. I would especially like to highlight the performance of our senior enlisted leaders who got out and about across the ships, landing crafts and exercise areas ashore to make this exercise an unqualified success."

Preparing for the unexpected during an exercise such as Ssang Yong brings about many factors which contribute to the success or failure of the mission.

"One of the most challenging aspects of this exercise was working through some weather related challenges," said Moore. "It was cold off the coast of South Korea; it actually snowed one morning, for those who had to work outside, like flight deck personnel, this was a significant departure from what we are accustomed to off the coast of San Diego. Of course, our Sailors and Marines adapted and overcame the challenging environment and performed their duties superbly."

Ssang Yong, Korean for "twin dragons," is a biannual, bilateral amphibious assault exercise conducted in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations by Navy and Marine forces with the ROK in order to strengthen interoperability and working relationships across the range of military operations from disaster relief to complex, expeditionary operations.

The 4,500 Sailors and Marines of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit are currently transiting the 7th Fleet area of operations during a regularly scheduled deployment.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2(SW/AW) Jose Jaen

## Hong Kong on Liberty





# Surgical Team brings more than Medicine to Boxer's Fight

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Matthew N. Jackson



U.S. Navy photos by MC2(SCW) Brian P. Caracci

In defense of their country, Marines stand ready to go into harm's way. To ensure they have the best medical care available, as close to the front lines as possible, the Navy integrated Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 3 with the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) Medical department to expand the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) medical capabilities.

"FST 3 moved aboard Boxer last July and began formally integrating with the medical department," said Cmdr. William B. Warner, FST 3 officer-in-charge. "We used the trip to Seattle Sea Fair to build friendships with Boxer's crew, get our 'sea legs,' and provide the team some initial shipboard training. The FST provided didactic and skill lab training to Boxer corpsman. We ran combined casualty reception drills throughout workups. Even now we continue to refine and advance our ability to work together as one team."

FST 3 is a complementary augmenting corps that expands medical treatment capabilities to enable greater levels of care.

"FST 3 adds surgical capability to Boxer's medical department," said Warner. "This requires not just a surgeon, but also an anesthesia provider, perioperative nurse, and surgical technicians. We have a corpsman with specialization in laboratory medicine, blood banking, and radiology. Our intensive care unit (ICU) nurse and respiratory therapist are critical to the function of Boxer's ICU and medical ward."

This time around, several mental health professionals also join the team of eight officers and 10 enlisted medical professionals.

"A recent addition to FST is a psychiatry team which has proven to be a tremendous resource to the ARG/MEU," said Warner.

FST 3's integration extends beyond practicing medicine.

"With the exception of some specialized shipboard taskers, FST 3 has

fully integrated into shipboard life and duties in Boxer medical," said Lt Dana Lilli, Senior Medical Officer aboard Boxer. "We are one blue medical team and we share responsibilities including watches, duty, sick call, medical screening and even maintenance."



***"No other military in the world has the depth of medical personnel to support deployments, wars, and other contingencies the way we do."***

They received extensive training in order to meet the broad variety of challenges they may encounter during Boxer's deployment.

"We each have specific training that is required for our respective specialties," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Riafel Reyes. "As a team the training courses we have received include under water egress, fire fighting, basic life support instructor, advanced cardiac life support, Navy trauma training, en route care, and clinical site visits."

Lilli conveyed the importance of integrating the skills of FST 3 personnel into the larger corps of medical providers.

"The FST actually affords us capabilities as a level two, resuscitative surgical treatment and medical support facility," said Lilli. "FST 3 is one of three parts of the BOX ARG/MEU medical team, and all three parts are intimately integrated and co-dependent. In my opinion, this integrated team epitomizes all that is military medicine. Our readiness and capabilities exemplify Navy medicine at its best."

Warner said leading FST 3 and working with Boxer medical has increased his level of appreciation.

"It has given me a greater appreciation of who I really support as a Navy physician," said Warner. "No other military in the world has the depth of medical personnel to support deployments, wars, and other contingencies the way we do."

Fleet surgical teams provide resuscitative and surgical support to existing medical departments. Their range of capabilities include: emergency room response, emergency surgical care, treatment of battlefield injuries evacuated from ashore, to treating industrial-type injuries sustained in a shipboard environment, and illness that may require surgery such as appendicitis.

## SEL Note



Hi, I'm Machinist Mate Senior Chief (Surface Warfare/Air Warfare) Amos R. Kenebrew II, the Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL) at COMPHIBRON One. A native of Texas, and an alumni of the Mighty Mighty Jaguars. Growing up as a proud Texan, my first thought was of serving my country so I joined the Navy.

In what seemed to be a dream at times, I found myself waking up in basic training at Recruit Training Command, Chicago, Illinois with the banging of garbage cans being thrown, kicked, and shuffled around. So I rose to the occasion. In Chicago, the winters were cold and the nights felt long because this was my very first time being this far away from the great state of Texas and my Mom of course.

Now I know, initially I introduced myself as MMCS but my very first designated rate in the Navy was Boiler Technician (BT). Yes BT! You ask what is a BT? A BT is someone who tends to the maintenance and operation of a boiler which is sometimes referred to as the big steam kettle because of the similar way it creates steam.

Upon graduating from my second big challenge in the Navy, BT A-School, I was sent off to my 3rd challenge, my very first duty station. Have you ever stood near a super tall building and imagined, how'd they do this? Well that's how it felt when I saw my first ship. It seemed at the time to be tallest, widest, and even the longest structure I'd ever seen.

I was scared and fascinated at the same time. After conquering my fears of meeting Goliath face to face, I can proudly say I've served onboard five more ships and alongside some of the world's greatest professionals.

Now I proudly serve on number 4 alongside your proud professionals here at PHIBRON One.

I hope all is well back home and with the PHIBORN families. I definitely look forward to meeting you one day. Take care and safe travels! Hooyah!

Most Respectfully,  
MMCS(SW/AW) A.R. Kenebrew II  
Commander, Amphibious Squadron ONE  
Senior Enlisted Leader

# Harpers Ferry Sailors bid farewell to Hong Kong

Story By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Zachary Eshleman (March 25, 2016)



**HONG KONG** – Dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) departed Hong Kong following a successful port visit March 25.

The visit allowed Sailors and Marines the opportunity to experience culture, cuisine, people and landscape of the city, while exploring in their own groups and during Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) tours organized by the ship's MWR committee.

"It was so cool to be able to experience the incredible diversity in culture, one second you're walking in a modern city and the next you're in a local market or coming across a

temple or monument," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Matthew Gentile.

In addition to MWR tours, the crew had the opportunity to participate in cultural exchanges coordinated by the ship's chaplain and to interact with local youth and children at the G.T. (Ellen Yeung) College, Cheerland Nursery School Kindergarten, and CMA Choi Cheung Kok Secondary School.

"It was incredible to see how much simply playing and reading with these children improved their day," said Information Technician 3rd Class Megan Ellison, who participated in the cultural exchange. "That experience was the highlight of my Hong Kong port visit."

The crew was also able to do a subject matter expert exchange with the Hong Kong Marine Police Harbor division to practice Visit Board Search and Seizure tactics.

According to the ship's Chief Master at Arms, Chief Jose Cruzalvarez, the Sailors and

Marines conducted themselves professionally, and successfully upheld the image of good order and discipline that the ship promotes while in port.

"The crew of Harpers Ferry continued its record of successful operations by viewing liberty as a mission and enjoying Hong Kong without any liberty incidents," said Cruzalvarez.

Since leaving San Diego February 12, Harpers Ferry has conducted operations in the U.S. 3rd and 7th Fleet areas of operations to include participation in Exercise Ssang Yong 16.

Harpers Ferry is part of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). The Boxer ARG, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit team is deployed in support of maritime security operations and theater security efforts in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

For more news on USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) visit [www.navy.mil/local/lsd49](http://www.navy.mil/local/lsd49)

## Boxer Departs Hong Kong

Story By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Craig Z. Rodarte (March 25, 2016)



**HONG KONG** – Amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (13th MEU) pulled anchor and departed Hong Kong after completing a four-day port visit, March 25.

During the rain-soaked visit, Boxer's first port call since departing San Diego Feb. 12, service members participated in 14 Morale, Welfare and Recreation tours and five cultural and subject-matter expert exchanges.

"The Boxer crew, Amphibious Squadron One and 13th MEU did a great job while enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation in one of the most beautiful cities in Asia," said Boxer Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Ruth.

While in Hong Kong, Boxer's Religious Ministries department arranged several cultural exchange events which allowed Sailors and Marines to interact with local people and exchange information about customs and lifestyles.

"The main goal for cultural exchange events in a foreign port is to successfully create a lasting bond and relationship between us and the host nation," said Chief Religious Programs Specialist Joseph Stroney, Boxer Religious Ministries department Leading Chief Petty Officer. "This is done simply by being willing to learn and accept their culture while at the same time sharing our culture with them."

According to Cmdr. Charles Hodges, command chaplain aboard Boxer, the exchanges were designed to positively reinforce the partnership and fellowship among participants.

"People experience a sense of satisfaction that is not found elsewhere, and they broaden their horizons," said Hodges. "While liberty is good, these events are a great way to relieve the stress of deployment."

At another highly anticipated event, team Boxer pulled off a narrow 4-2 victory over the Hong Kong Police Department (HKPD) team during a soccer match between Boxer crewmembers and the HKPD officers.

"Boxer's very own soccer team, played a well rounded match, despite a muddy and unconventional pitch, filled with water from goal to goal," said Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Doug Bedford, the ship's goalkeeper. "I can't wait to see how we fare in the matches in future ports!"

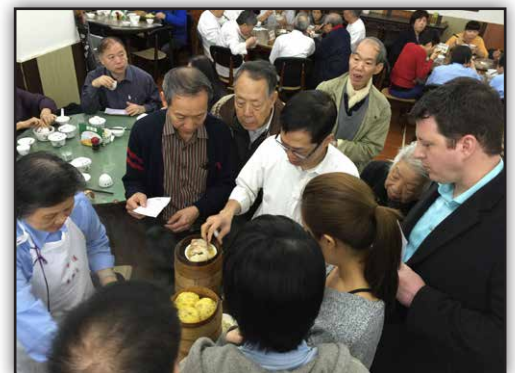
With the Hong Kong port visit complete, the crew now shifts focus to the upcoming mission.

"Their focus should be on readiness. Equipment readiness, personnel readiness and tactical readiness," said Ruth.

The Boxer ARG, 13th MEU team is currently on a regularly-scheduled deployment in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

Boxer is the flagship of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), which consists of Boxer, USS New Orleans (LPD 18) and USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49).

For more news from USS Boxer, visit [www.navy.mil/local/lhd4/](http://www.navy.mil/local/lhd4/).





# Commodore's Corner



Family and Friends,

I could not be more proud of the performance of our ships, Sailors and Marines since we departed San Diego. Individually and collectively, the crews have excelled.

The Engineering departments from BOXER, NEW ORLEANS and HARPERS FERRY are to be commended for getting us to our exercise off the coast of Korea on time. The ARG had to divert over 500 miles to avoid bad weather when we left training in the Hawaiian operating area which meant the ships had to go full speed for three to four days to make up the time. It was amazing how the engineers rose to the challenge and still a source of immense pride.

Once on station, BOXARG set the standard for amphibious operations during Exercise SSANG YONG while working with the South Korean Navy and the Amphibious Forces permanently assigned to Seventh Fleet. You may have read or heard about the exercise on the news. Be proud in knowing that your Sailors and Marines kicked butt, as punctuated by NEW ORLEANS conducting a flawless recovery of her forces and gear -- an event scheduled for 8 hours that she safely completed only 4!

By the time you read this we will have completed our first port visits: HARPERS FERRY, BOXER and PHIBRON ONE to Hong Kong, NEW ORLEANS to Phuket, Thailand. All crews, Blue and Green, created some lifelong memories while serving as good ambassadors of the Navy/Marine Corps.

CPR1 recently bid LCDR Chris Van Loenen farewell as he headed off to Newport, Rhode Island and welcomed his relief, LCDR Graham Fletterich, to the CPR1 family.

We are excited as we transition from operations in Seventh Fleet to the Fifth Fleet Area (tax free!!) and continue what has been a very successful deployment.

Thank you for your continued support, thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely, CDRE Moore

# Happy Birthday to February and March Birthdays

*U.S. Navy photos by MC2(SCW) Brian P. Caracci*





# 5K Run in Celebration of Women's History Month

AT SEA (March 27, 2016) Sailors and Marines aboard amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) participate in a 5K run in celebration of women's history month. *U.S. Navy photos by MC2(SCW) Brian P. Caracci*







# USS Boxer Observes Women's History Month

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Debra Daco (March 27, 2016)

Throughout the month of March, amphibious assault ship USS Boxer's (LHD 4) Diversity Committee held several events in observance of Women's History Month.

A solutions-based women's focus group aimed at increasing female career Sailor retention, an observance ceremony, cake cutting, and 5K run were spread across the month of March to provide information and culture to 2,467 Sailors and Marines of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (13th MEU).

The inaugural event honoring the contributions of female servicemembers was a four-day women's focus group. Female Sailors examined the unique challenges females encounter in the Navy and explored potential solutions the Navy can implement to increase retention among the females throughout the rank structure and fleet.

"We are in the world's greatest Navy and I think that has a lot to do with the vast amount of knowledge, experience and

diversity," said Senior Chief Quartermaster Aurora Robles, coordinator of the women's focus group. "I think it's important to maintain, embrace and expand that force into the future so we continue learning from one another."

During the women's focus group, Sailors were given a chance to voice their opinion and hear other female's opinions on women's retention in the military.

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*"Just like men, women are an asset to the Armed Forces," said Personnel Specialist 2nd Class Karmen Sales. "This focus group shed light on the issues that women face on a daily basis. The military is what you make it, if you choose to stay in the fight, give it all you've got."*

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Throughout the sessions, chief petty officers helped lead the focus group. They underscored the value of mentorship among senior and junior Sailors.

"I think that women can do just as much as men in the military," said Robles. "If we teach and instill that 'can do' attitude in our children growing up and mentor our junior Sailors with that same mentality we will set

them up for success."

Boxer's Diversity committee also organized a Women's History ceremony in the hangar bay, March 19. The speakers highlighted the service, leadership and tradition of women in the Navy focusing on this year's theme – "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government."

"[We had] great turn outs on both events," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 1st Class Della Smith, President of Boxer's diversity committee. "Events like these bring unity, and strengthen our culture of diversity aboard Boxer to work together as a team."

The culminating event was a 5K flight deck run and Women's group photo.

"It was great to be a part of something new," said Chief Aerographer's Mate Quintron Perry. "It's easy to get caught up in our daily schedules; however, men and women alike came together on a hot day for a good cause. Events like this define our value of diversity in the Navy."



U.S. Navy photo by MC2(SCW) Brian P. Caracci



# Hong Kong Community Relations

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Craig Z. Rodarte, MCSN Eric C Burgett, MC3(SW) Jesse Monford

